

Facemask Therapy

An occasional orthodontic problem is the upper jaw not being forward enough in the face. This may be a cause for the upper and lower teeth not fitting properly. One of the most effective ways of treating a growing child with a “short” upper jaw is with facemask therapy. The facial mask is a wire framework that fits against the forehead and the chin. The patient attaches rubber bands to the mask that are then connected to the upper teeth in order to pull the jaw forward. With good cooperation, the upper jaw and its teeth can be brought forward out ahead of the lower teeth improving the overall fit of the teeth.

Beginning facemask therapy takes three appointments. In order to apply the forward pull force to the upper jaw, orthodontic bands must be placed on the upper back teeth. To these bands an appliance is constructed to which the forward pulling rubber bands are attached. A common characteristic of the short upper jaw problem is also a narrow upper jaw causing a crossbite of the back teeth. If this problem is present, the rubber bands are directly attached to an expansion appliance. Effective treatment requires daily application of the forward pulling force. Research shows that when the facemask is worn continuously each night (over 12 hours a day) the problem can be corrected in three to six months. Overcorrection is important because some relapse occurs. Once corrected, the hours of wear will be decreased as needed to hold the corrected position.

Orthodontists have utilized this concept of correcting the short upper jaw for over 100 years. Correction of the mismatch of upper and lower jaws at an early age with the facemask allows better fit of the permanent teeth without unnecessary tooth movements. This therapy is the most effective way to correct a difficult orthodontic problem. We feel you will be pleased by the eventual results. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ron Snyder and Staff

